

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

SMART SECURITY AND IRAQ WITHDRAWAL PLAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, our Constitution states that Members of Congress must be chosen by the people of the United States, and Congress must represent the people of the United States. That means that we as Members of Congress need to listen and need to act when the people speak.

Well, the American people have spoken. The last Gallup poll released earlier this week indicates that the American people are ready for our military forces in Iraq to start coming home. Nearly 60 percent of Americans believe that the U.S. should bring home some or all of our troops from Iraq. Just as revealing, the Gallup poll showed that only 36 percent of Americans support maintaining our current troop levels in Iraq. This is the lowest level of support for the war since it began in March of 2003.

The American people have stated loud and clear where they stand, and their numbers are increasing. They know that the only way to keep our sons and daughters from being killed in Iraq, and the only way to end the death and destruction that occur there every single day, is to begin the process of bringing our troops home. Clearly, the American people are way ahead of Congress on this issue.

Unfortunately, the President of the United States is way behind on the issue of Iraq. We have asked the President to come up with a plan for ending the war. He has not, so we will.

Our efforts to come up with a plan began in January when I introduced legislation calling for the President to begin bringing our troops home. Thirty-five Members of Congress support this legislation. We continued our effort on May 25 when I introduced an amendment to the defense authorization bill calling on the President to create a plan for Iraq. Mr. Speaker, 128 Members of Congress, including five Republicans and one Independent, voted in favor of this sensible amendment.

It is clear that the United States must develop a smarter agenda for Iraq

than a continued military occupation, because the 2-year war has left us disturbingly weakened against the true security threats that we face here at home. Let us not forget, Osama bin Laden is still at large, and al Qaeda continues to recruit new members in Iraq and elsewhere every single day. So, we ask the President to create a plan and bring it to the Congress that will bring our troops home. Once they are home, we can secure the U.S. and Iraq for the future, and we can use a smarter resolution, which is a Sensible Multilateral American Response to Terrorism for the 21st Century. It will help us address the threats we face as a Nation.

SMART Security will prevent future acts of terrorism by addressing the root conditions which give rise to terrorism in the first place: poverty, despair, resource scarcity, and lack of educational opportunities, to mention just a few. SMART Security encourages the United States to work with other nations to address the most pressing global issues. SMART Security addresses global crises diplomatically instead of by resorting to armed conflict.

Instead of maintaining a long-term military occupation of Iraq, our future efforts to help the Iraqi people must follow the SMART approach: humanitarian assistance, coordinated with our international allies, to rebuild Iraq's war-torn physical and economic infrastructure.

That is what I mean when I talk about SMART Security. We can defend America by relying on the very best of American values: our commitment to peace and freedom, our compassion for the people of the world, and our capacity for multilateral leadership.

Mr. Speaker, we must follow a smarter approach as we work to help the Iraqi people, which means implementing a plan to end the war in Iraq. I invite the President, I invite all Americans and all Members of Congress, to join in this effort.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. FOSSELLA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FOSSELLA addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

IMMIGRATION REFORM EMPHASIZING FAMILY VALUES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIERREZ) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to talk about family values and creating an immigration system that better values families, a system that keeps families strong and, most importantly, keeps them together.

I know the issue of family values is a top priority for the President and for

many in this Chamber, but when it comes to the issue of immigration, I am afraid our Nation's efforts to protect families, to keep mothers and fathers, parents and children together has fallen far short.

So let me begin this evening by highlighting an example of the tragic consequences of our failed immigration policies and its disastrous and often destructive affects on hard-working families in my district.

Meet the Benitez family. Rodolfo Benitez is a supervisor at the Civic Opera House's Tower Club. He is a U.S. citizen who works extremely hard so his children in the picture, who are also citizens, can get a good education and can realize all that our country has to offer. They are a great family. They are active and well-liked, respected in their community. And if you ever get a chance to meet Rodolfo, Jr., Brenda, Andrea, and their new baby, Eric, you will quickly realize that they are all we could wish for in children.

But, Mr. Speaker, while this story may appear on the surface to have all the makings of the American dream, our Nation's convoluted immigration laws are making life a nightmare for the Benitez family, because about a year ago, Rodolfo's wife Maria was deported without time to even get her life in order. As the Chicago Tribune wrote, "Her school-age children, who returned home one day with the panicked question: 'Where's mommy?'"

As parents, can anyone in this body imagine having to answer that question? Can anyone in this body imagine explaining to these beautiful, young children that their 4-month pregnant mother was being deported 2 days before Mother's Day with barely enough time to kiss her children goodbye? Can you imagine telling your children that they will not have the opportunity to see their new baby brother when he is born, because the Government of the United States and its immigration policy says, we are going to deport her? It is simply heart-wrenching.

But in cities and small towns across our country, there are thousands of families facing the exact same situation as the Benitez family, because too often, our immigration system tears families apart, leaving single parents to fend for themselves and leaving children to grow up without a loving mother or father. Too often their stories are never told, and defenseless children and parents are forced to suffer in silence.

In the case of Mrs. Benitez, we were fortunate enough to get her a temporary visa to return from Mexico to the United States so she could receive proper prenatal care and ensure that there were no complications with her pregnancy, but that visa expires this summer, and, after that, our immigration system, our law enforcement system will take Mrs. Benitez back to Mexico and take her away from her American citizen children and her American citizen husband. Who in this body can say that is right?